Awakening to Awareness

One morning, among the visitors was a professor of philosophy from the North of India. He had been to Shri. Maharaj before, and although he lived away from Bombay, he was fortunate enough to be able to visit Shri. Maharaj during his college vacations. This morning he was accompanied by a friend of his, an artist, a painter of some merit. It was made clear that the painter was only mildly interested in what Shri. Maharaj would speak about.

The professor started the discussion without much ado. He said he was so struck by what Shri. Maharaj had told him during his last visit that every time he thought about it sent a shiver through his body. Shri. Maharaj had told him that the only way was the way he had arrived, and that there was no other way: he must GO BACK. The sentence itself, when he heard it, struck a deep chord within him, leaving no room for questions. But subsequently, when he began to think more about the matter, especially the 'How' of it, he had found himself hopelessly entangled in an ever-expanding mass of ideas and concepts. It was exactly as if Shri. Maharaj had placed into his palm a wonderful, brilliant diamond which had suddenly disappeared, and no amount of search could locate it.

Shri. Maharaj began to speak softly. He said, "Please understand. No matter remains static the moment it is given expression. Add to it the fact that in order to communicate with each other the words 'I' and 'you' and 'we' and 'they' have necessarily to be used. The very first thought breaks the unicity and creates duality; indeed it is only in duality that communication can take place; the words themselves further expand the differences. But that is not all. Then the listener, instead of directly apperceiving what is

being communicated, begins the process of relative reasoning with its implicit limitations when applied to the subjective and the noumenal.

Shri Maharaj: Are you with me so far? All right. Let us proceed. What is relative reasoning? It is only a process of reasoning ~~comparing~~ whereby a subject creates in his consciousness objects with opposing qualities or characteristics which could be compared. In other words, the whole process cannot work without a subject-object basis. Such relative reasoning may be effective for describing objects by comparison. But how can it work with the subjective? That which conceives, the subject, obviously cannot conceive itself as an object! The eye ~~cannot~~ can see everything else except itself!

Are you, therefore, surprised that you have found yourself engulfed in a mass of ideas and concepts from which you find yourself it impossible to extricate yourself? If you could only see the actual position: what a joke.

This is the essential background. Now, to the real problem. Who is this 'you' that is trying to go back the way you came? No matter how far back you go, chasing your shadow, the shadow will always precede you. What is meant by going back? It means going back to a position when there was total absence of the body and consciousness. BUT - and this is the crux of the matter - so long as there is a negator who keeps negating and negating, (chasing the shadow) 'you' will remain un-negated. Try to appreciate what I am saying not with your intellect, 'you' using your intellect, but as appreciating as such.

I wonder if I have made myself

clear.

At this stage, I happened to look at the artist friend of the ~~visit~~ professor and was struck by the intensity of his concentration; instead of being bored, or mildly interested, he was listening to every word of Shri Maharaj as if hypnotised. Shri Maharaj must have also noticed this because he smiled at him and the artist, without uttering a word, folded his hands in salutation and nodded his head several times.

The professor, however, seemed to have come to a mental ~~block~~ obstruction, an impenetrable block, and said so. Shri Maharaj told him that this 'block' was of the imaginary obstruction of an imaginary 'you', which has identified itself with the body.

Shri Maharaj: I repeat there must be a final total negation, when the negator himself disappears! What you are trying to do is to understand what you are, by means of a concept of 'existence'; whereas 'I' neither am nor am not; 'I' am beyond the very concept of existence. Unless of this is understood very profoundly, you will continue to create your own imaginary obstructions, one more powerful than the other. What you are trying to find IS what you ARE.

Professor: Does it mean then that no one can lead me back to what I AM?

Shri Maharaj - That is indeed so. You are - you always have been - where you want to be led. Actually, there really is no 'where' that you can be led. Awareness of this obvious position is the answer. and the joke is that such awareness can NOT be an act of volition. Does your waking state come about by itself or do you awaken yourself as an act of volition? Indeed, the least effort on 'your' part will

prevent what otherwise might have happened naturally and spontaneously. And the joke within the joke is that your NOT doing anything will also prevent it happening. It is simple really: both 'doing' something and 'not doing' something are a volitional effort. There must be a total absence of the doer, the total absence of both the positive and the negative side of 'doing'.

When the professor and the his artist friend were leaving, Shri Maharaj smiled at the artist, and asked him whether he would be coming again. The artist paid his respects most humbly, and said he could not see how he could possibly avoid it. I could not help wondering who had the real benefit of the talks that morning: the Philosopher with his learned intellectuality, or the artist with his sensitive insight.